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## Lebanon's Uneasy Peace

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*Central Intelligence Agency  
Directorate of Intelligence*

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### ***Key Judgments***

Lebanon has made virtually no progress in solving its problems in the last six months. Indeed, as positions have hardened and options tentatively tried and dropped, a solution seems further out of reach than ever. A renewal of the countrywide civil war does not appear likely so long as the Syrian-dominated Arab peacekeeping force remains in place; one hopeful sign is that all of the principal contending parties seem interested in continued restraint. Nevertheless, isolated incidents—all of them capable of dangerous escalation—are frequent, particularly in the south. Should Syria decide to withdraw the bulk of its forces from Lebanon for whatever reason, the country would shortly be on the verge of national collapse.

The present situation of uneasy stalemate could persist for months, since the forces that have created it have proved themselves resistant to change. President Sarkis and the central government are close to helpless. Yasir Arafat and his Palestinians are determined to resist any additional application of the Cairo accords that would restrict their behavior; in particular, they are determined to hold on to the weapons they view as their only safeguard against complete subjugation by the Christians.

The Christians, who—with considerable Syrian help—came out more or less on top in the fighting, are not disposed to compromise or negotiate away the extensive privileges guaranteed under the existing constitution. The Syrians, who continue to occupy most of the country except for the south, may have begun to regret the need to tie down so many troops, but have little alternative as long as their presence is the sole instrument for maintaining order.

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Outside forces—notably the four countries represented on the quadripartite committee that was originally supposed to supervise the implementation of the Cairo accords—have also operated to maintain the status quo. As long as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait resist the forcible disarming of the fedayeen, out of fear that any move into the camps would touch off renewed full-scale fighting, the Christians will show no disposition to disarm their private militias, which are perpetuating all-but-autonomous Christian areas within the country. Israel, by encouraging and supporting Christian intransigence, is reducing whatever likelihood existed that the Christians might deem it wisest to compromise. Syria is showing the greatest interest in forging some sort of resolution to the crisis, but Syria's key weapon all along has been military force. With its use against Palestinians in the camps ruled out by Arab dictum and its use against the Palestinians in the south barred by Israeli fiat, Syria has been effectively prevented from taking any decisive moves.

The absence of a Middle East settlement that attempts to come to grips with the problem of the Palestinians has an obvious bearing on the situation on Lebanon. Even should Lebanese Muslims and Christians come to some sort of political accommodation, the 350,000 Palestinians in the country, many of them under arms, will almost certainly prevent the restoration of Lebanese harmony. Indeed, the presence of the Palestinians is already operating to abort attempts at cooperation. Even if rigid efforts were made to keep the Palestinians out of the country's political life, even if the Palestinians sincerely cooperated in these attempts, such a large, unassimilated minority cannot help but remain a political factor—one that is inevitably brought to bear on the side of the Muslim left. The Christians know it. They refuse to contemplate a future that would reduce them to the status of a minority in the country they once dominated, while an alien group influences, or even dictates, the country's policies. Hence their interest in the creation of an autonomous Christian state, however economically unviable, that might somehow find shelter under the Israeli shield. The leftists, for their part, are understandably reluctant to return to the situation before the war when, although a majority, they were consistently relegated to minority status through the workings of an outmoded constitution. Not all of them are in total sympathy with Palestinian goals, but they do not see themselves in any position to walk away from their allies—particularly in view of Syria's recent alliance with the Christians during the fighting.

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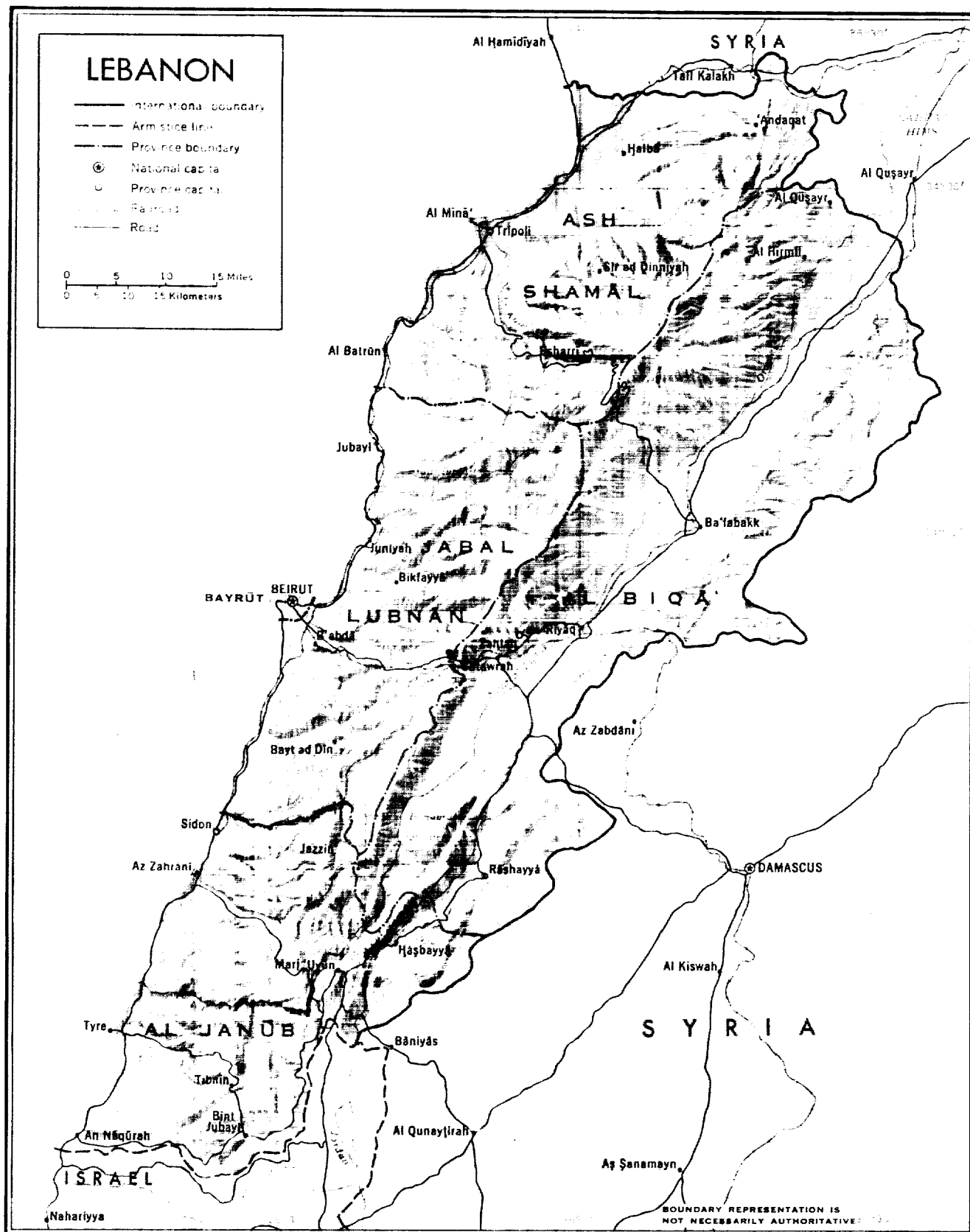
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A future Middle East settlement would go a long way toward resolving this dilemma; indeed, it may be a prerequisite for any eventual peace in Lebanon. Since a resumption of negotiations seems to be brewing, despite the unresolved question of a Palestinian presence at Geneva, the principal contenders on the Lebanese stage may be hoping that if they sit tight long enough, their chief problem will go away. But the very possibility of a Middle East peace has an effect on the situation in Lebanon. Syria has to be unusually careful not to get out of step with the other Arab states involved in maneuvering toward a settlement, particularly Saudi Arabia and Egypt; escalation in Lebanon could well derail settlement efforts, and Syria does not want to bear the onus for re-igniting the conflict. By the same token, Israel, which does not want to come under pressure to make concessions in the context of negotiations, let alone come to grips with the problem of the Palestinians, is less reluctant to stir up trouble in south Lebanon.

The Palestinians, for their part, believe it essential to approach negotiations from a position of strength and so are even more determined not to render themselves helpless in Lebanon than they would be in any case; at the same time they wish to preserve their recently mended relations with Syria, since Syrian help would be vital in any Geneva scenario. They are therefore playing a complicated game, attempting to give an impression of flexibility and willingness to cooperate in order to maximize Arab support, while holding tight to their few remaining bargaining chips—their weapons and their relative freedom of movement in the south. The possibility of a settlement has had yet another effect on the Palestinian movement; it has acted to split it into warring camps, with the majority advocating moderation in an effort to win a Palestinian state on the West Bank, and a radical minority resolutely opposed to any recognition of Israel, whatever the prize. One result for Lebanon has been frequent battles as each wing has attempted to establish supremacy over a particular camp or in a particular area of the south; another has been the virtual impossibility of coming to any agreement with respect to Lebanon's future that all the Palestinians would accept.

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## Lebanon's Uneasy Peace

### The Sarkis Approach

Ilyas Sarkis was originally able to assume the presidency of Lebanon because, although a Christian with ties to former President Shihab, he was sufficiently apolitical that he did not antagonize any of the country's contending groups. The fact that he stood apart from the country's bitter factions and spoke for an all-but-defunct central government gave him a moral authority unmatched in Lebanon; many hoped that Sarkis, as an honest broker, might be able to steer through a generally acceptable political compromise.

Sarkis has largely failed to capitalize on the opportunity. Hampered by a caution so basic as to be crippling, he has managed to avoid generating serious criticism from any one group—but at the cost of virtual paralysis. Initially, he made the decision to give priority to economic reconstruction, reasoning that the restoration of something approaching economic normality would induce a sense of momentum and optimism that could facilitate the far harder task of hammering out new political ground rules. To this end—and also to avoid stirring up partisan sentiment—he appointed a colorless cabinet composed largely of technicians. Unfortunately, his plan has not worked, largely because funds from abroad have failed to materialize in the necessary quantities. Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states, in particular, have hung back from substantial commitments; the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, bankrolled by the Arabian Peninsula states, recently announced a grant of \$38.5 million tied to specific projects, but the amount is little more than a drop in the bucket of Lebanon's needs.

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Sarkis and his ministers have been at fault here. For all their emphasis on reconstruction as the first priority, little concrete planning has been done. A reconstruction and development council is still getting organized. The other government departments do not know where to begin, resulting in much duplication and wasted effort. Several donors have been asked to finance the same project on the theory that one of them may come through, a practice that has generated a certain amount of irritation. The situation has been further complicated by a lack of reliable data on the extent of the need, supplies on hand, or even the basic population. Potential donors rather understandably feel that the government has some homework to do before it can spend money effectively.

#### **The Cairo Accords**

The Riyadh agreement last October which ended serious fighting in Lebanon called for the implementation of the Cairo accords, an umbrella term covering agreements reached in 1969 and 1970 regulating Palestinian activity in Lebanon. At a subsequent Arab League summit, a quadripartite committee composed of representatives of Syria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait was formed to oversee application of the accords, which were supposed to be fully implemented within 90 days—by January 1977.

The accords, which have never been implemented, are highly ambiguous; parts are unwritten. Even so, by January it appeared that all the parties—including the Palestinians—had managed to agree on the interpretation of the plan being pushed by Sarkis. Palestine Liberation Organization chief Yasir Arafat promptly came under fire from opponents in the PLO, however, and withdrew his approval; by February the Syrian-dominated peacekeeping forces were preparing to raid the fedayeen camps and confiscate weapons by force.



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At this point the consensus began to unravel. The raids were postponed, partly at the request of the United States, which was anxious to avoid what could have been a serious outbreak of fighting on the eve of Secretary Vance's trip to the area.

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There has been little perceptible movement since the option to enter the camps was shelved. Sarkis has stubbornly held to his personal interpretation of the Cairo accords: only seven Palestinians per thousand can be armed, no heavy weapons are to be allowed in the camps, and the camps are to be protected by joint Lebanese-Palestinian security forces. Various compromise formulations have been put forward by one or another of the parties; Arafat would appear initially amenable, but ultimately he would refuse to go along and the tentative agreement would collapse. The plan arrived at on July 25 by Syrian, Lebanese, and PLO negotiations for yet another try at implementing the Cairo accords appears headed in the same direction. Despite conciliatory statements, the Palestinians show no signs of yielding their heavy weapons, nor do the Syrians appear ready to jeopardize their relationship with Fatah by moving to disarm the Palestinians. Although much time and energy has been focused on formulas and the numbers of Palestinians allowed to bear arms, the basic issue seems to be clear and fundamental: Sarkis is not willing to let the Palestinians maintain an armed force capable of defending the camps, believing that Arab peacekeeping forces, and eventually the Lebanese army, should carry out this function. Arafat simply refuses to give up an independent Palestinian force in Lebanon, on the theory that asking the Syrians to safeguard the Palestinians from the Christians is like putting the wolf in charge of the sheep.

The Christians, who acquiesced in the cease-fire last November on the understanding that the Cairo accords would be enforced, have been outraged by the subsequent stalemate. Back in May they publicly declared the accords null and void, a move designed to put pressure on Sarkis and the Syrians to take steps to enforce them. The denunciation of the accord was repeated on June 25 in a communique which went on to warn that political reconciliation would never be possible as long as an armed Palestinian

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presence remained in the south. Despite such signs of a hardening Christian position, there is little the Christians can do to improve matters in the absence of Syrian willingness to move. What they can do they are doing- issuing public statements to put pressure on the central government, sending representatives to plead their case to interested Arab states, and working to keep the areas they do control strictly in their own hands. The chain of events since February can only work to strengthen their refusal to trust the Palestinians and their sense of estrangement from the rest of the Arab world.

Any move to unblock the impasse would have to come from Syria. Syrian officials are fond of saying that the decision belongs to Sarkis and they stand ready to carry out his will, but Sarkis' control of the Arab peacekeeping forces is largely a legal fiction. Only the Syrians could authorize a forcible move against the Palestinians, and the Syrians are probably not ready to take such a step in the face of Arab—or at least Saudi—disapproval. The Syrians are currently concerned as well about repairing their damaged ties with the Palestinians, both on general principles and in the event of Geneva peace talks. The military alliance with the Christians during the fighting with Lebanon has been a serious embarrassment for Damascus, particularly since the Christians have shown no restraint in flaunting their ties with the Israelis. The Syrians seem to have decided that their wisest course at this juncture is cooperation with Fatah and the Palestinian moderates against the radical rejectionists; they are probably sympathetic to Palestinian arguments that they cannot be expected to leave themselves defenseless in the face of Christian intransigence, and they certainly buy the argument that Fatah must not disarm if the rejectionist Palestinians refuse.

**The "National Front"**

Once the Syrians had decided not to push ahead with attempts to enforce the Cairo accords, they set in motion an effort to launch a broad national front, aimed primarily at the Muslim left but open to Christian parties as well. The Syrian move was preceded by several indigenous Lebanese moves toward similar goals. Last November, a "Congress of Nationalist Forces" attempted to unite the country's traditional Muslim political leaders and the more radical followers of Kamal Jumblatt; most of the moderate Muslims, however, boycotted the meeting. After Jumblatt's assassination in March, two of the traditional Muslim politicians, Rashid Karami and Saib Salam, tried to organize such a grouping to fill the vacuum,

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but split over the question of whether or not to include the Communists and more radical leftists.

In May, the Syrians first tried to woo Jumblatt's son Walid, who has taken over his father's leadership of the leftist Progressive Socialist Party, by offering him the leadership of a broad national front. When Walid turned them down they decided to go ahead using Kamal Shatila, a minor figure who had once been a pro-Egyptian Nasirist but has since come completely under Syria's thumb. Shatila kicked off his campaign in June with the support of the Syrian-dominated Lebanese Baath party; his program, not surprisingly, called for the closest possible coordination between Lebanon and Syria.

The response was distinctly unenthusiastic. Several minor leftist parties agreed to participate, but Walid Jumblatt's party and the influential extremist Murabitun party took the position that if the front adopted all the principles of the existing leftist "national movement," there would be no need for it; if the front did not, they were not interested in joining. Traditionalist politicians have raised various objections; the Christians have refused to get involved. Sarkis himself probably has no wish to see such a grouping until he can forge one under his own leadership.

Syria's heavy-handed sponsorship of Shatila's move probably doomed it from the start. In any event, Damascus seems to have recognized the bankruptcy of the idea. Syria has not, however, abandoned the effort to generate some kind of political momentum; it has recently engaged in intensive contacts with a series of Lebanese leaders and Palestinian officials, including Walid Jumblatt, Fatah extremist Salah Khalaf, Foreign Minister Butrus, and Rashid Karami. It is not clear just what Syria expects these talks to accomplish. Perhaps Damascus has worked out some specific proposals looking toward eventual political reconciliation or an easing of the festering situation in the south, or perhaps it simply cannot admit that all avenues toward progress are blocked, and believes the appearance of activity is better than nothing. Syria must be increasingly reluctant to face either successful Geneva negotiations or the collapse of negotiating prospects with a large percentage of its army indefinitely bogged down in Lebanon. It cannot afford to let the situation simply drift.

#### **Rebuilding the Army**

The establishment of an effective Lebanese army could be the key to the formation of a future, stable Lebanon. The lack of such an army is

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certainly the primary factor in the current stalemate between the Lebanese government and the PLO; the Israelis will permit only Lebanese forces into the south to police the Palestinians; Christian militias can plausibly argue that disarming themselves would be totally unreasonable in the absence of an army. The Lebanese central government can never exercise sovereignty if it does not have at its disposal military forces it can use to maintain order.

While not all of Lebanon's contending forces would enthusiastically welcome a restored army—the Christians, for example, would just as soon retain their present militias—few factions would oppose it. The primary exceptions are the leftist parties and the Palestinian rejectionists who have profited from the country's chaos to take root in Lebanon. The moderate Palestinians, however, might well regard a strong and unified Lebanese army as a counterbalance to the Syrians and the Christian militias, and as giving them a responsible entity to deal with.

The magnitude of the problem is staggering. When the old Lebanese army disintegrated under the pressure of the outbreak of civil war, its heavy weapons—which had been stored in outlying bases in the north, south, and Biqa regions—were seized by the renegade leftist Lebanese Arab Army, by the Palestinians, and eventually by the Syrians. Virtually none of this equipment has been recovered. The Christians, who form the bulk of those returning to army ranks, were left largely with light weapons and poorly maintained, worn out equipment. Perhaps half the existing army barracks were destroyed in the fighting; most army facilities were stripped and looted. Current recruiting efforts are seriously hampered by the lack of facilities in which men can be quartered—let alone fed, clothed, and armed.

General Victor Khury, the new army commander, faces a struggle he cannot help but find daunting. A cautious man, he is approaching it in a methodical, step-by-step way, determined to lay the groundwork for every step. He began by appointing a study committee, carefully balanced as to religion, rank, and army branch, to make appropriate recommendations; he then turned his attention to the appointment of a headquarters staff. Here he immediately discovered that his every nomination was scrutinized and challenged by the leaders of Lebanon's squabbling sects.

An obvious immediate priority has been the need to form a cohesive officer corps capable of tackling problems of every dimension. A government decree promulgated in mid-February offered generous benefits to any officer

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willing to retire voluntarily within three months—the idea being to induce wholesale resignations, then refuse to accept those of high-caliber men. The plan backfired. As of the mid-May deadline, only about 200 out of an officer corps of 950 had submitted their resignations, and most of them were highly qualified, with technical skills the army desperately needed—the sort of men who could, of course, most easily find jobs elsewhere. Few extremists—the target of the program—submitted their resignations. The deadline was extended until the end of the year, but Khury is still faced with the problem of weeding out undesirables by more direct methods—no easy task, since many of them are protected by one of the country's influential political groups.

Khury is in no hurry to fling together combat units. The only effective unit at present is the first brigade, located in the Biqa Valley, composed of elements of the former “Vanguards of the Lebanese Army”—a largely Shia force which operated with the Syrians during their initial push into Lebanon last year. A detachment of these troops successfully put down an outbreak of local fighting in June. Khury apparently expects to move shortly, however, to begin forming two new infantry battalions, one drawn from the best elements of a Christian brigade now at Juniyah, the second from Muslim and Druze elements now in the Shuf. He is apparently hoping to work toward the formation of three infantry brigades with supporting units—two tank battalions, two artillery battalions, one signal battalion, one engineering battalion, and the necessary headquarters and administrative troops—which, in time, could be expanded. No timetable, however, has been established.

Ideally, the reorganized units would be confessionally mixed, but Khury does not believe he can cope with the problem of integration yet, and perhaps not for the foreseeable future. Even units in the Biqa, which are technically mixed 55 percent Muslim and 45 percent Christian, are actually split between the first brigade—90 percent Shia Muslim—and the predominantly Christian air force units. Khury's minimum goal is nevertheless a distribution of positions of responsibility between Christians and Muslims, opening to Muslims posts denied to them in the past.

Khury's goals may defy realization. He has been criticized for lack of leadership and insufficient technical knowledge. His caution is nevertheless probably an asset; he refuses to be railroaded, recognizing that the embryonic army must be given time to develop, or it will fracture under the slightest pressure. One thing is clear: the formation of an effective Lebanese

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army will not be a speedy process. However urgent the need for its deployment—for example in the south—the army is simply not ready.

**The Festering South**

The situation in south Lebanon constantly threatens to erupt into serious fighting. Shelling is continual between Christian and Palestinian positions and sometimes between Palestinians and Israelis across the border; more serious incidents, often involving ground movements, break out periodically. A number of factors are responsible. Both moderate and radical Palestinians have fled or been herded south since the cessation of countrywide fighting, threatening the position of Christians in the area who, with Israeli help, have been trying to maintain a *cordon sanitaire* along the Lebanese-Israeli border. The Israelis have made it clear they will not tolerate the introduction of Arab peacekeeping forces—almost entirely Syrian—south of the Litani river; the central Lebanese government, with only a rudimentary army, is helpless. Only the numerical superiority of the Palestinians, on the one hand, and the threat of Israeli intervention, on the other, maintain a semblance of status quo in the area.

The Christians made their bid to challenge the growing Palestinian domination of the area in April, when they launched—with Israeli support in the form of supplies, training, and artillery—an offensive against selected Palestinian positions. The Christians achieved some initial successes, but Palestinian numbers told in the end: the Christians were driven back and would have suffered additional losses had the Palestinians not halted, chiefly out of fear of provoking the Israelis. Activity since then has largely been confined to shelling and occasional probes of one another's positions. There has been considerable tension, however; each side has managed to convince itself that the other was on the verge of an offensive and has geared itself up accordingly—thus fueling its opponents' apprehensions. Complicating the situation is the autonomous status of the local forces, which gives the initiative to the local commanders and makes it difficult or impossible for the larger forces backing the southern groups—Christian leaders in Beirut, the Israelis, the Syrians—to restrain their clients or even, in some cases, to check out the situation. Some local groups, such as the rejectionist Palestinians, are controlled by no one at all.

The Syrians, barred from the area by the Israeli refusal to allow them south of the Litani on pain of invasion, apparently decided early on that cooperation with the moderate Palestinians was the only way to rein in the

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rejectionists, who might be tempted to launch cross-border raids into Israel. They have allowed moderate Palestinians, including brigades of the Palestine Liberation Army, into the south, have occasionally extended artillery support from their positions north of the Litani, and have sent in members of the Saiqa fedayeen group, which they control. Some of the Saiqa members are almost certainly Syrian commandos in disguise. These forces have generally tried to avoid dust-ups with the Christians and the Israelis. One result, however, has been a buildup of Palestinian forces in the area, a development which has alarmed the Israelis.

25X6 The Israelis are determined to stave off the growth of any fedayeen capability to harass them from across the Lebanese border. They seem to believe the Syrians could, and should, force the Palestinians to pull back—without setting foot across the border themselves [REDACTED]

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25X6 [REDACTED] Throughout the fighting in 1976 and early this year, the Israelis encouraged and supported the Christian attempt to create a fedayeen-free zone along the border, but they reduced their visible assistance to the Christians somewhat after the April outbreak—perhaps in an effort not to antagonize the United States. In the middle of May, however, they apparently made a decision to step up their efforts. The result was cross-border operations, some roadbuilding, pressure on Muslim border villages on the western slopes of Mount Hermon to accept Christian hegemony, the maintenance of ready-reaction forces on the Israeli side of the border, and, of course, continuing support to the Christian forces. These activities only served to convince the Palestinians that an Israeli attack was imminent, provoking intensified defensive preparations.

There seems to be no promising way out of the cycle of action and reaction. The Palestinians, however, who are in a relatively secure position in the south as long as the Israelis exercise restraint, recently launched what appears to be a sincere attempt to negotiate a cease-fire. Beginning in early July, Palestinian emissaries Hani al-Hassan and Salah Khalaf embarked on a series of meetings with key Lebanese figures—Shamun, Sarkis, Prime Minister Huss, and Saib Salam. They have apparently proposed a package consisting of a cease-fire in place followed by mutual withdrawals to establish a demilitarized zone, the establishment of a joint Lebanese-Palestinian military committee to supervise these arrangements, and the deployment of Lebanese army units in the south. Withdrawals in the south form part of the plan announced on 25 July; they are scheduled to go into effect after the plan's

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initial phase—involving implementation of the Cairo accords in and around Beirut—has been completed.

It is not clear whether the plan has any chance of getting off the ground. Christian extremist Camille Shamun, at least, is taking a hard line calling the proposals nonsense and claiming that the search for an agreement is a waste of time as long as the Palestinians do not return to the positions they occupied before the outbreak of the war in 1975. Even Pierre Jumayyil, leader of the more moderate Christian Phalangists, has argued that the proposals place the southern Lebanese and the Palestinians on an equal footing; it is one thing to ask the Palestinians to withdraw, another to oust the inhabitants of a village from their homes.

At least some Christian leaders may be actively hoping for an Israel intervention that would solve their problems for them. They are fed up with the general stalemate and no more disposed than ever to tolerate Palestinian interference in Lebanon; their hope that the Syrians would deal with the Palestinians has faded. Many Christians, if not most, want nothing so much as an independent, if not autonomous, Christian state in Mount Lebanon under Israeli protection. Israeli occupation of south Lebanon is acceptable if it helps them realize their broader goal. In any event, they believe they have little reason to trust the Palestinians on this proposal or any other.

There are other problems with the proposed plan. Even if the Christian political leadership were enthusiastic and somehow managed to sell the idea to the militia leaders in Beirut, it is not at all clear that the fighters in the south could be controlled. The Lebanese army is not in any shape to move into the south; Khury is convinced that the army would splinter under the strain of dealing with Muslim-Christian incidents, and the central government does not seem eager to try the experiment. The most likely prognosis is therefore more of the same—a constant level of tension in the south which occasionally flares into ugly incidents, and a continuing danger that the Israelis will decide their security requires intervention in force.

#### Outlook

The chief hope of progress in Lebanon lies in the fact that representatives of opposing groups—except for a handful of extremists in each camp—are still talking. Certainly the Syrians will do all in their power to forge some sort of resolution of the current impasse. They may well have hopes of ending up with some sort of permanent link to Lebanon, entailing a



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continuing need to embroil themselves in Lebanon's affairs, but they have an immediate interest in easing a situation that has tied down a substantial number of Syrian troops.

Their leverage is limited. Relations with the Christians are strained; Syrian peacekeeping forces have moved into traditionally Christian areas that the Christians regard as their private preserve, a step that has led to nasty incidents—and at least 60 Syrian dead. The Christians can no longer have any illusions that Syrian goals and their own are the same. The Syrians will not support a superior Christian status in postwar Lebanon, will not enforce the Cairo accords, and have moved to reconcile themselves with the Palestinians; little wonder that the Christians have become deeply distrustful and have begun to regard Israel as their only reliable ally.

Syrian relations with the Palestinians have in fact improved to an extent that would have seemed impossible when the fighting was at its height. Arafat and Asad are nevertheless uneasy allies. For all that Syria and the Palestinians need one another's support, particularly if negotiations with Israel materialize, each is aware that the other is strictly motivated by self-interest. It is convenient for the two to cooperate to put down the rejectionists and maintain enough order in the south to avert Israeli intervention, but the kind of independence Arafat wants is not in Syria's interest. Barring the use of force, Syria has little hope of forcing Arafat's compliance with the Cairo accords—certainly not to the extent that the Christians or probably even Sarkis, want.

Moderates in all three camps—Christian, Palestinian, and leftist—seem sincere in wanting to avoid renewed fighting and open to dialogue. Of the three, the Christians are the least amenable to compromise; they went into the war as the dominant political group in the country, came out with the upper hand, are the most vulnerable in any kind of solution based on sheer democratic principles, and have an ally little inclined to urge restraint. Much therefore depends on their perception of their own interests. They are outnumbered. They have every reason to fear the outbreak of war, if Syria fights on the opposite side. Although Syria has no intention of letting such a situation develop if it can avoid it, contemplation of the possibility could incline the Christians to moderate their demands. But they are no more likely than the Palestinians, or any of the other groups, to compromise before they must—a situation that, at best, will result in protracted instability, constant maneuvering for advantage, and sporadic violence.

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*The author of this paper is [redacted]  
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welcomed and should be directed to [redacted]*

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